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# PurchasingWorld®

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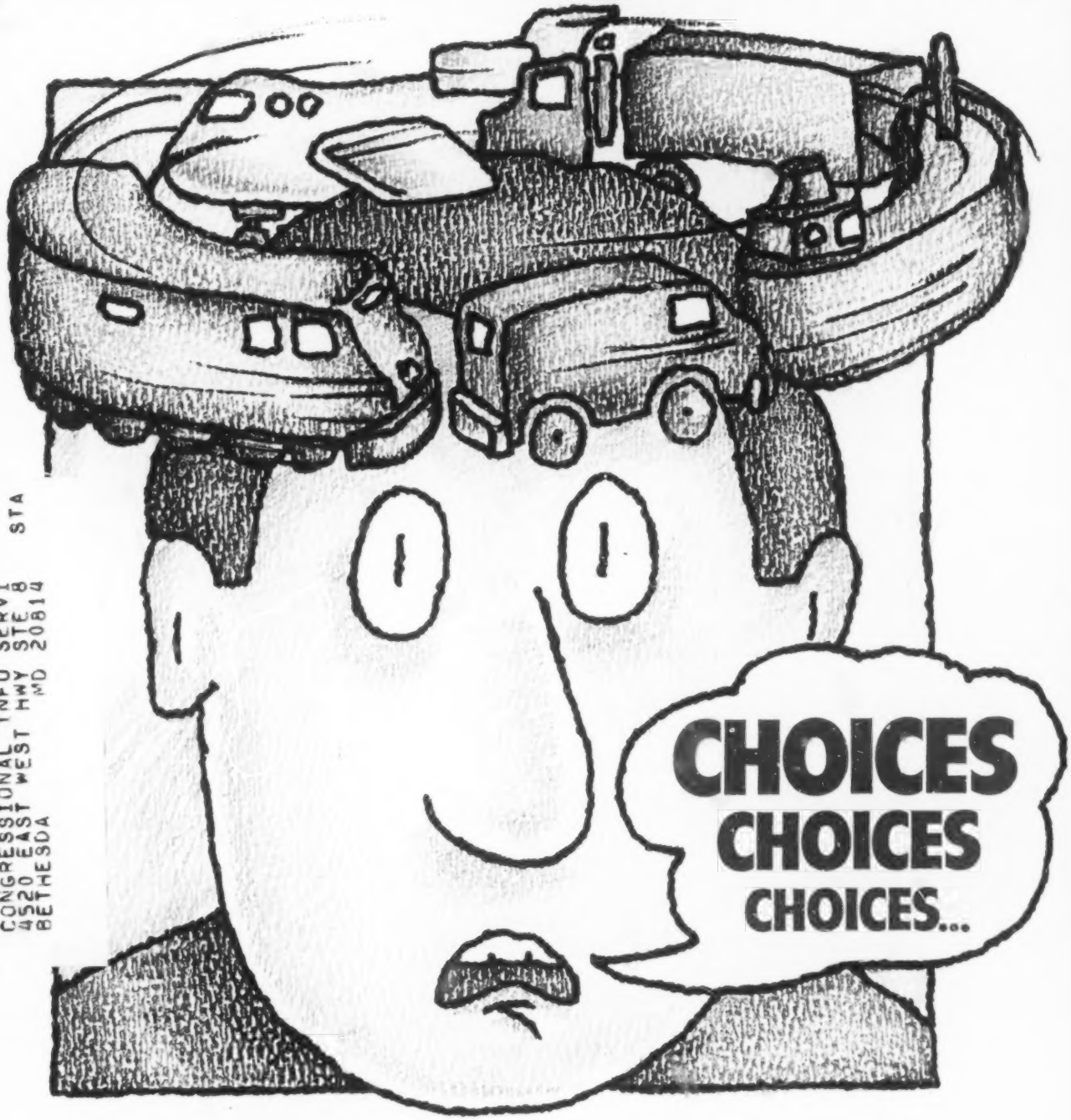


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1988 Crystal Ball contest winners

Managing the vendor sales rep

Making Electronic Data Interchange work

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## Material and labor costs help to keep lid on price increases

Last year's big raw material price runup seems to be running out of steam—good news for the overall near-term price outlook.

Lest there be any doubt, *PW's* Price Barometer—a time-tested indicator of grassroot material cost pressures—has been edging lower since last fall. Over the past four months it has slipped nearly 3%, in contrast to the previous seven months when averages jumped by nearly 20%. Equally significant, the BLS "crude non-food material" index has dropped by more than 3% in the last few months.

The change is most apparent in nonferrous metals. Copper is already heading down after reaching a high of near $1.50/lb in December. Lead and zinc have also peaked. And while aluminum is still very high, the prognosis is for some slippage by summer or early fall.

Construction materials, including lumber, should also take a breather as housing starts slow. Energy tags should also soften, impacting petrochemicals and plastics.

Basic material input costs aren't the only things keeping a lid on overall price increases these days. New figures show unit labor costs (wage rates adjusted for productivity) in the nonfarm sector rising only 1.9% in 1987—less than the 3.2% and 2.2% posted for 1985 and 1986.

It would be unrealistic to expect a repeat of last year's small gain, but any unit labor cost acceleration in 1988 is likely to be quite modest. On the productivity side, for example, a 1-1.5% gain is expected for 1988. And for manufacturing, the gain is likely to be even more impressive.

No problems are anticipated from the other part of the unit labor cost equation—namely wage rates. And that holds even if unemployment rates dip below the current 6% rate. Many economists used to believe that the "natural" jobless rate was slightly over 6% and that if it fell below that level, pressures for inflationary boosts would build. Recently, however, estimates of the minimum point have slipped to around 5%. Look for 1988 wage boosts to be modest—about 4%.

This absence of labor and material cost pressures can't be underestimated. That's why price forecasts for 1988 and 1989 are so optimistic. The Presidents Council of Economic Advisors puts the GNP price deflator at only 3.9% this year and 3.7% for 1989.

DRI price projections are equally engouraging. The consulting firm's estimate calls for a 3.5% GNP increase on a year-to-year basis. Its more narrow industrial producer price forecasts call for increases of 3.9%, 5.0%, and 4.7% for 1988, 1989, and 1990.

## Price forecasts to 1990

Price increases may be picking up a bit, but the acceleration is likely to be quite modest—with a 3.9% overall boost in industrial tags anticipated for the current year.

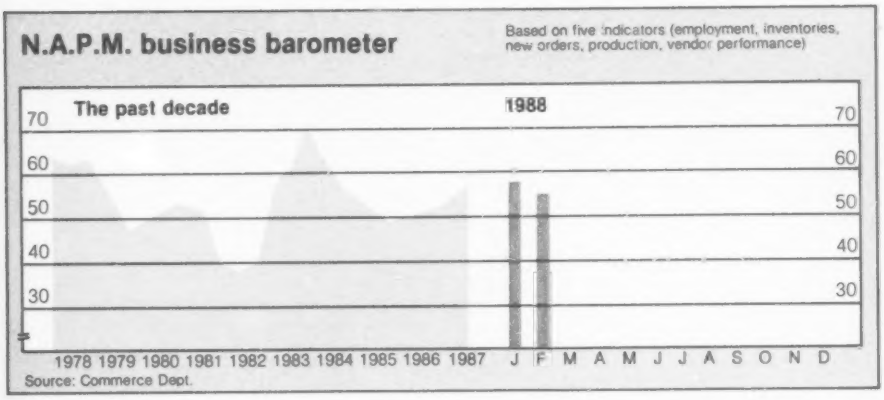
That's only a little more than one percentage point over 1987's 2.6% increase. Even in 1989 and 1990, boosts aren't expected to top the 5% mark.

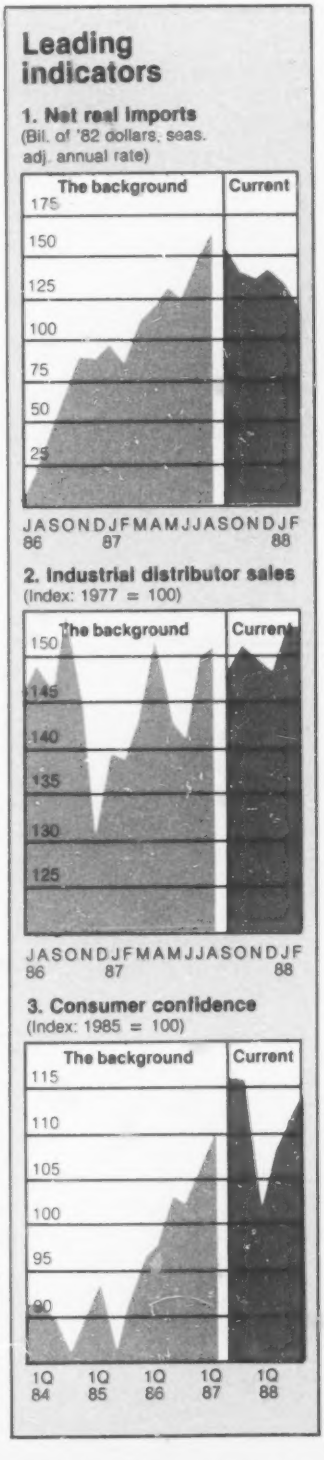
At least that's how analysts at DRI see it. Preparing their regular quarterly report for *PW* readers, they attribute much of the moderation to relatively low wage cost boosts: 4.2% this year, not all that much higher than last year's 3.6% advance.

But price averages tell only part of the story. There could be significant product-by-product variations—with even a few declines possible in the copper area (see table below).

| Product line | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Raw materials—energy** | | | |
| Supplies for manufacturing | 3.0 | 3.7 | 4.2 |
| Finished lubricants | −0.3 | 4.9 | 5.3 |
| Corrugated boxes | 10.2 | 2.9 | 3.8 |
| **Metals** | | | |
| Steel mill products | 6.7 | 4.2 | 5.0 |
| Steel plates, carbon | 19.7 | 1.5 | 4.5 |
| Foundry & forge shop products | 3.5 | 6.4 | 5.2 |
| Coper scrap | 68.3 | −43.3 | −9.9 |
| Nonferrous mill shapes | 22.7 | −4.5 | 3.8 |
| Titanium sponge | 0.0 | 1.1 | 3.2 |
| Sheet metal products | 5.6 | 1.0 | 2.7 |
| **Components** | | | |
| Rubber & plastic products | 5.0 | 3.9 | 3.4 |
| Laminated plastic sheets | 2.3 | 1.8 | 2.6 |
| Industrial controls | 1.2 | 3.8 | 4.8 |
| Transistors | 1.2 | 1.5 | 2.1 |
| Machine shop products | 1.6 | 4.7 | 7.1 |
| **Construction** | | | |
| Calcium oxide | 3.3 | 1.5 | 2.1 |
| Paint materials | 6.5 | 6.2 | 5.3 |
| Concrete rebars | 4.2 | 5.2 | 5.2 |
| Aluminum siding | 10.0 | 2.7 | 1.8 |
| Gypsum products | −6.7 | 5.5 | 4.8 |
| **Machinery** | | | |
| Capital equipment (mfg.) | 2.3 | 4.3 | 4.8 |
| Capital equipment (non-mfg.) | 2.3 | 4.0 | 4.1 |
| Trucks over 10,000 lb | −2.0 | 4.8 | 5.5 |
| Furnaces (forced air, gas) | 1.7 | 6.4 | 6.1 |
| Fans & blowers | 0.7 | 4.9 | 5.8 |

Source: Data Resources, Inc., Cost Forecasting Services


N.A.P.M. business barometer
Based on five indicators (employment, inventories, new orders, production, vendor performance)
The past decade
1988
70
60
50
40
30
1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 J F M A M J J A S O N D
Source: Commerce Dept.




## KEY ECONOMIC TRENDS

### Confidence and momentum are building the economy

The first quarter of 1988 has turned out to be better than expected. While some deceleration is likely, there's little on the horizon to suggest near-term decline in overall business activity.

As Robert J. Bretz, chairman of the NAPM Business Survey Committee puts it, "while the pace of growth is slowing, the economy is still managing to register respectable increases." To back this up he points to the NAPM Business Barometer (chart above) which, while off from the previous month, is still well above the neutral 50 mark.

One reason for the continuing positive readings here: A rise in exports. Some 33% of surveyed NAPM buyers report an increase in export orders over the latest 30-day period—on top of the gains noted during recent months.

Further confirmation of the export pickup can be seen in figures showing a declining trade deficit. In the first quarter, for example, net real imports declined by more than 10% —enough to provide a lot of new business for domestic factories.

Still another sign of factory strength is the recent rise in industrial distributor sales. This key indicator of future production activity has been slowly trending up—as factory managers get ready for modest gains in the months immediately ahead.

Also on the optimistic side is the improvement in capital equipment orders—especially machine tools. This reflects the rise in factory operating rates which has necessitated some upgrading of expansion plans.

Consumers, too, are behaving better than expected following the recent stock market tumble. Indeed, the latest Conference Board consumer confidence index shows consumers increasingly upbeat over the past three months. This yardstick has regained virtually all of the ground lost following the October crash.

One particularly good sign: A big jump in plans to buy a new car over the next six months—to 4.5% of surveyed families, and within shooting distance of the 4.8% peak of last summer.

This, in turn, could be why Detroit is raising its car production sights. Current plans call for making over 1.9 million units in the second quarter—up from 1.7 million during the first three months of the year.

Other areas are looking up, too. Plans to buy a major appliance over the next six months are up sharply—with more than one out of three consumers contemplating such a purchase.

Why all the optimism here? Part is due to a low

(under 6%) jobless rate. And spendable incomes continue to rise. About a 6% gain is seen for 1988—enough to allow for a real increase even after a 3-4% boost in consumer prices.

Last but not least is the recent slight drop-off in interest rates. The prime rate averaged out near 8.5% during the first quarter—close to the 8.2% average for 1987. Other things being equal, this should make for increased purchases by businessmen as well as consumers.

That's not to say that GNP is ready to take off. Housing starts are down. And while auto sales are holding up, they will still probably fall short of 1987 totals. Finally, there's Uncle Sam's spending. True, the deficit is still very large. But it is edging lower, and to the extent it shrinks, it means that much less government money being pumped into the economy.

The best bet is for a 2-3% real GNP advance over the next few quarters—considerably under the big 4.5% fourth quarter 1987 jump but still respectable.

## Supply lines stay smooth

Much of the slack in the U.S. economy is disappearing. At latest report, the average factory is operating at just over 82% of capacity—up 3% from 18 months ago.

Highest rates are in the paper, plastic resins, and textile areas which are up in the 95% range. And primary metal operations in the 90% area attest to scattered current tightness in copper, aluminum, and steel.

There's little to suggest a mushrooming supply problem. We are still 3% under the 85% level that historically has signaled shortages.

There has also been some increase in new plant and equipment spending over the past few months—although it will be some time before this translates into meaningful additions to onstream capacity.

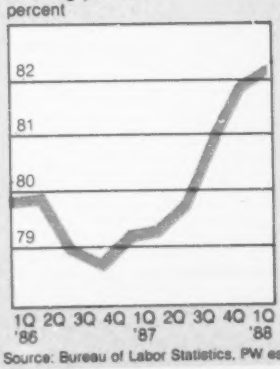
The increases in industrial production that pushed operating rates up are beginning to slow down now. Only a 2-3% advance in output is now projected for the next 12 months—less than half the 6% increase racked up over the past year.

Finally, this 2-3% projected production increase is in line with estimated capacity increases over the same time span. The implication is that operating rates will stay where they are—at least as far as overall averages are concerned.

This is not to say that certain items won't remain on the tight side. On the other hand, several areas could begin to loosen up toward the end of this year—notably metals and plastic resins. The latter should be aided by a 5% increase in capacity this year.

### Operating rates inch up

**The big picture**
percent



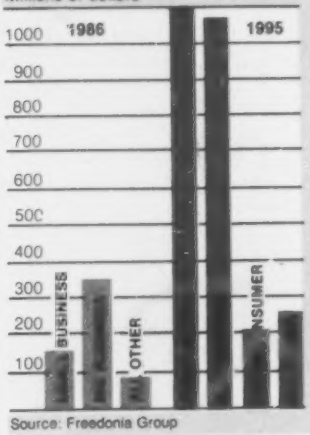

**Industry-by-industry**
(latest operating rates %)

| | |
|---|---|
| Primary metals | 89.6 |
| Fabricated metal products | 80.8 |
| Non-elect. machinery | 76.7 |
| Elect. machinery | 76.3 |
| Automotive | 76.7 |
| Instruments | 78.4 |
| Textile mill prods | 94.1 |
| Paper & prods | 96.5 |
| Chemicals & prods | 85.9 |
| Petroleum prods | 87.7 |
| Rubber & plastics | 88.5 |
| Utilities | 81.6 |

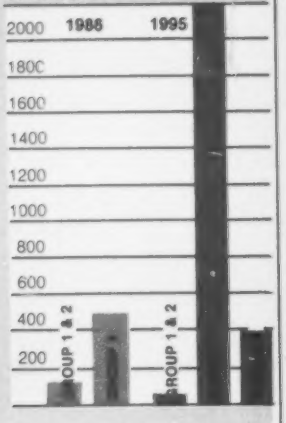
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, PW estimates

### Facsimile equipment: Big growth ahead

**By users**
Millions of dollars




**By type of equipment**
Millions of dollars




Source: Freedonia Group

## Fax usage quickly builds equipment market

Facsimile growth is only beginning. Current projections show continued strong gains (about 18% annually) through the mid-1990s.

That's how analysts at the Freedonia Group see the market. The Cleveland-based research outfit predicts that sales (only around $600 million in 1986) will balloon to $1.34 billion in 1991 and to near $2.7 billion by 1995.

Most of the gains will be in Group 3 machines—those that use digital transmission and are capable of forwarding documents with up to twice the resolution of earlier machines—all in 30 seconds or less. As the accompanying chart suggests, $2.2 billion (83%) of total 1995 sales will be for this type of fax.

But gaining popularity (from near-zero sales at present) will be Group 4 machines which are expected to comprise 7.5% of the market in 1991 and 15% by 1995. These more versatile machines (expected to sell for an equal of $3,333 in 1991 and $2,860 in 1995) are able to interface with computer

systems—and add a number of new telecommunications applications.

From an end-user perspective, small businesses will join their bigger counterparts in jumping on the fax bandwagon. Each segment will account for slightly more than 40% of the market, with small business use growing the fastest—about 25% a year.

Home use—now near zero—is also scheduled for big growth. As costs come down (Group 3 machines are expected to sell for an average of $2,000 in 1991 and only $1,770 in 1995), more and more families will be able to shop, bank, and send messages via fax—making for a market of near $205 million by the mid-90s.

### This month's breakdown

Index: 1982 = 100

| | Latest level (February) | % change from: Month ago | Year ago |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bearings | 110.2 | 0.6 | 2.3 |
| Bolts, nuts, etc. | 105.1 | 0.4 | 2.1 |
| Chemicals, inorganic | 97.2 | 1.1 | 3.0 |
| Chemicals, organic | 98.1 | −1.6 | 7.3 |
| Concrete products | 109.6 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Corrugated cartons | 105.8 | 0.0 | NA |
| Cutting tools, small | 107.1 | 0.5 | 0.9 |
| Electric lamps (bulbs) | 122.1 | 0.6 | 1.2 |
| Electronic components | 115.8 | 0.0 | 0.3 |
| Fans and blowers | 112.5 | −0.5 | 1.7 |
| Foundry and forge products | 107.4 | 0.3 | 2.2 |
| Fuel oil (residual) | 44.1 | −3.7 | −16.9 |
| Furniture, commercial | 121.3 | 0.1 | 3.6 |
| Gasoline | 53.8 | 0.0 | −2.4 |
| Glass, flat | 108.8 | 0.5 | 3.0 |
| Glass containers | 112.5 | −0.1 | −0.8 |
| Gypsum products | 115.1 | −4.5 | −12.7 |
| Hand tools | 118.7 | 0.3 | 3.4 |
| Hand tools, power driven | 110.5 | −0.1 | 0.9 |
| Industrial furnaces | 118.8 | 0.7 | 4.2 |
| Integrating and measuring instruments | 116.1 | 0.3 | 3.1 |
| Internal combustion engines | 110.7 | 0.4 | 1.4 |
| Lubricating oil | 102.9 | 0.8 | 2.7 |
| Lumber millwork | 120.2 | 0.5 | 4.5 |
| Material handling equipment | 106.0 | 0.1 | 1.9 |
| Metal containers | 108.3 | −0.2 | −1.5 |
| Metal mill shapes (nonferrous) | 120.9 | −1.1 | 22.7 |
| Metal tanks | 100.2 | 0.3 | 4.8 |
| Motors and generators | 119.4 | 1.2 | 4.3 |
| Motor trucks | 122.7 | 0.2 | 0.7 |
| Office and store equipment | 105.8 | −0.1 | 2.9 |
| Paperboard | 122.8 | 0.1 | 6.3 |
| Paper boxes and shipping containers | 119.5 | 0.0 | 5.8 |
| Paper office supplies | 111.4 | 0.7 | 2.8 |
| Paint | 109.8 | 0.3 | 2.4 |
| Plastic resins | 122.8 | 2.5 | 19.9 |
| Precision measuring tools | 119.0 | 1.9 | 5.8 |
| Pumps and compressors | 106.5 | 0.3 | 1.5 |
| Refractories | 112.5 | 0.0 | 2.4 |
| Rubber belts and belting | 102.8 | 1.4 | −1.7 |
| Scales and balances | 104.8 | 0.0 | 1.4 |
| Steel products | 107.7 | 0.4 | 6.7 |
| Switchgear | 111.2 | 0.6 | 2.1 |
| Textiles, synthetic fibers | 94.6 | 1.8 | 3.5 |
| Textiles, gray fabrics | 112.5 | 0.9 | 8.5 |
| Tires and tubes | 93.5 | 0.6 | 2.5 |
| Transformers and power regulators | 107.8 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Welding equipment | 114.5 | 1.1 | 3.7 |
| Wire and cable | 130.1 | −2.5 | 28.6 |

## CURRENT PRICES

### Prices creep upward—but barely

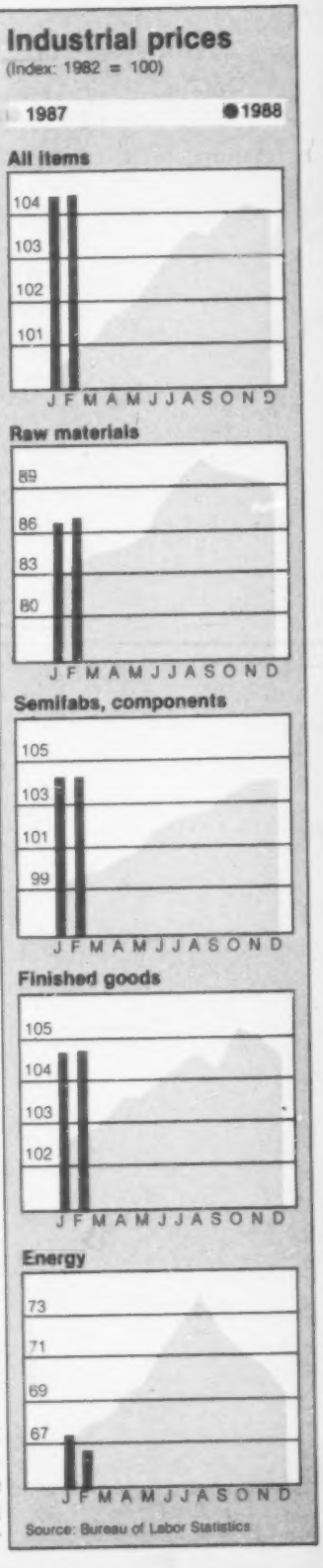
Industrial prices continue to behave better than previously expected—with overall quotes advancing only 0.1% over the past 30-day period—or less than 1.5% at annual rate.

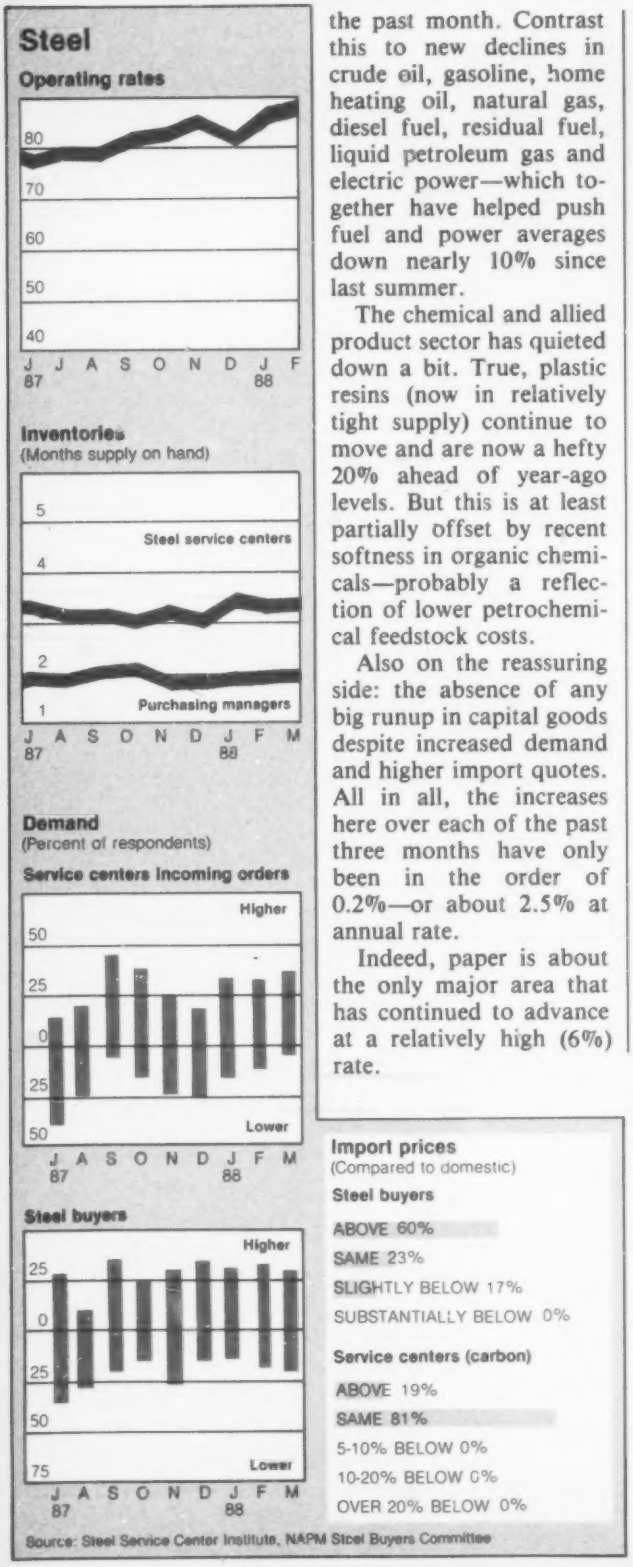
Declining energy prices contributed to the surprisingly small average advance. But it is also true that other areas have been taking a breather lately, including component parts where declines in motor vehicle parts and abrasive products offset increases in bearings and electric motors.

A somewhat mixed picture is also noted in the metals sphere. While steel mill products and aluminum have continued to edge up, both lead and copper are now well under their earlier highs.

A similar standoff is noted in construction materials as the housing slowdown impacts on demand. Falloffs last month were noted in construction sand, cement, nonferrous wire and cable, softwood lumber, gypsum products and asphalt roofing—enough to counterbalance boosts in structural metal products, plastic plumbing products, air conditioning and refrigeration equipment, millwork and hardwood.

If one best performing area has to be singled out, it would again have to be energy, with only coal moving up in price over






the past month. Contrast this to new declines in crude oil, gasoline, home heating oil, natural gas, diesel fuel, residual fuel, liquid petroleum gas and electric power—which together have helped push fuel and power averages down nearly 10% since last summer.

The chemical and allied product sector has quieted down a bit. True, plastic resins (now in relatively tight supply) continue to move and are now a hefty 20% ahead of year-ago levels. But this is at least partially offset by recent softness in organic chemicals—probably a reflection of lower petrochemical feedstock costs.

Also on the reassuring side: the absence of any big runup in capital goods despite increased demand and higher import quotes. All in all, the increases here over each of the past three months have only been in the order of 0.2%—or about 2.5% at annual rate.

Indeed, paper is about the only major area that has continued to advance at a relatively high (6%) rate.

## STEEL SCENE

### Demand for steel seen growing at least thru the spring quarter

You can figure on the now year-old steel buying boom spilling over thru the spring months. With this should come growing concern about availability (from all sources) and price.

About the only sign of a possible slowdown over the next few quarters is an increase in inventory accumulation by buyers and service centers. But, at this point the increase in stocks doesn't seem to be interfering with buying plans.

The reasons for that aren't too hard to find. For one, consumption is holding up quite well. If there's any doubt on this score take a look at durable goods industrial production. At latest report, this time-tested proxy for steel demand was running a solid 6% ahead of year-earlier levels.

But chewup is only one of several factors working to keep the steel market strong. Equally significant are continuing fears of shortages. The latest NAPM Steel Buyers' Survey, for example, finds that less than one in ten buyers surveyed feel steel procurement will be problem free over the spring and summer months.

Equally noteworthy here is that concern is expressed about each of the ten steel categories monitored in the monthly survey. Biggest worries are centered on plate, cold-rolled steel, and stainless.

Still another demand prodder could be expectations of additional price increases. In responding to the latest Steel Service Center Institute (SSCI) survey, some 89% said metal replacement costs would move higher over the next six months.

About the only positive sign on the price front has been a slight deceleration in the number of service centers who expect these near-term price increases to top the 5% mark. In the latest report, only 21% were putting future replacement cost boosts above 5%—compared to the 27-39% readings of the previous four months.

On a somewhat less optimistic note is few respondents look for imports to help keep a lid on prices. Indeed, virtually all distributors are now saying that both carbon and stainless steel import tags are at or above comparable domestic levels.

Buyers are pretty much agreed on this too. True, 17% still say there are some import price breaks. But, they are all dubbed "slight." Moreover, this 17% figure is well under the comparable 39% figure of just one year ago.

To sum up, a combination of factors is now working to keep steel demand high. And this demand could go even higher. Thus some 30% of queried buyers say they intend to increase their receipts of steel over the next three months—considerably more than the 20% who feel some reduc-

tion in purchases may be in order.

This kind of bullish demand scenario is suggested by service centers. Specifically 37% forecast an increase in their incoming orders over the next three months, versus only 5% who look for reduced bookings.

All of the above is not to say that there may not be some slowdown towards year end as consumption begins to flatten out and inventories edge higher. In fact, as suggested above, there are already signs of tonnages beginning to rise a bit. The latest buyer survey finds that steel holdings as of now are in the 2.0 month range—up from the 1.8 month reading of two months earlier.

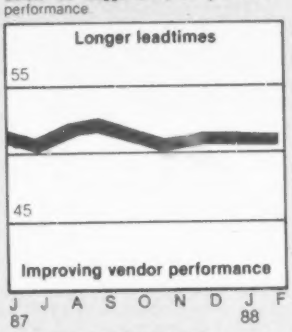
And distributors responding to the latest SSCI survey tell pretty much the same story. Their current 3.36 month supply marks the third consecutive monthly advance there—putting totals well above the just-under-three-months supply of late last year.

So far the service center increases in storeroom tonnages have been spotty—generally occurring in the tubular and structural areas according to SSCI president Andrew G. Sharkey.

**Monthly procurement status report**

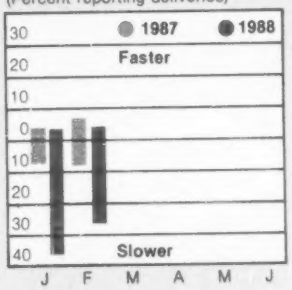
**Leadtime Index**

A "diffusion" index based on 158 key commodities. Above "50" indicates a tendency for leadtimes to stretch out. Below "50" suggests improving vendor performance.



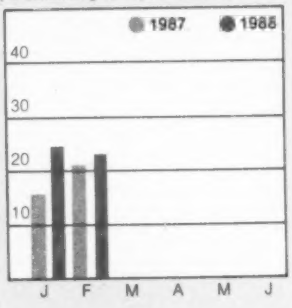

**Delivery performance**

(Percent reporting deliveries)



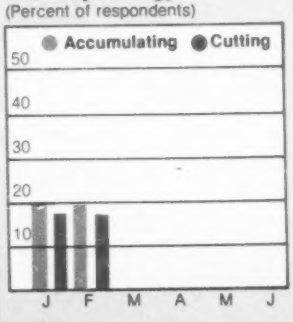

**Forward commitments**

(% committing 90 days or more in advance)




**Inventory strategy**

(Percent of respondents)




Source: NAPM

## PROCUREMENT STATUS

### Leadtimes lengthen on more products

Vendor performance still leaves a lot to be desired these days—witness the continuing upward movement in *PWs* leadtime index and the significant number of PMs reporting delivery delays.

On the latter score, more than a quarter of surveyed NAPM buyers were hit with slower deliveries this past month—far outweighing the 4% who were lucky enough to experience some speedup. But the report does add that "although members continue to be plagued with shortages in certain commodities, it appears that these shortages are fewer and the slowdown in deliveries is leveling off."

But this is small consolation to purchasing executives who are buying from the long list of commodities said to be in short supply: Aluminum, copper, steel (including hot- and cold-rolled sheets, plates, and stainless), bearings, caustic soda, acetic acid, ethylene and ethylene derivatives, plastic resin, phenol, styrene, methanol, methylethyleketone, and titanium dioxide.

A few further words are also in order on our leadtime index. We are now in the process of reviewing this exclusive *PW* yardstick—to make the report more meaningful and useful.

Our goals are to (1) expand geographical representation to more cities (2) tap a broader base of respondents, and (3) expand coverage to an area of increasing importance to industrial buyers—namely office equipment.

*PW* readers will soon be receiving detailed leadtime reports on such key product lines as copiers, PC workstations, fax machines, pre-printed forms, electronic typewriters, furniture, printers, and telecommunications equipment.

The target date for completion of this major revision: Sometime this spring—perhaps as early as next month.

## Coming next month...

How industrial distribution can assist MRO buyers—ways to locate hard-to-find products and get them delivered now!

What's new in packaging, materials and technology. Purchasing's involvement in both in-bound and outbound packaging selection.

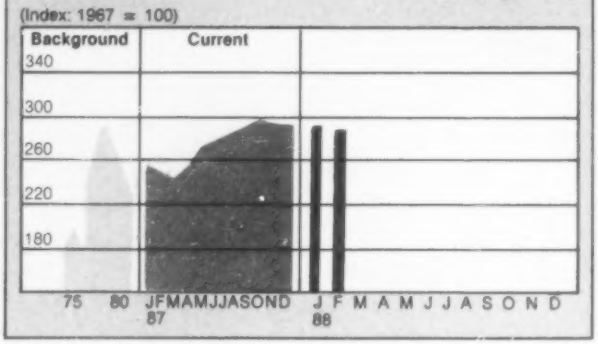
Using purchasing to procure professional services. How one firm involves the purchasing department in third-party contracts.

## BUSINESS DATATRAK

### Raw material price barometer

Latest month 289.3
Month before 292.5
Year ago 247.2

(Index: 1967 = 100)




### Latest spot market prices

| | Latest price | Previous month | Year ago |
|---|---|---|---|
| **FERROUS METALS** | | | |
| Pig iron, basic, valley, gross ton | 213.00 | 213.00 | 213.00 |
| Pig iron, Bessemer, Pitts., gross ton | 213.00 | 213.00 | 213.00 |
| Steel, billets, Pitts., net ton | 367.00 | 367.00 | 367.00 |
| Steel, structural shapes, Pitts., cwt. | 23.90 | 23.90 | 23.90 |
| Steel, structural shapes, Chi., cwt. | 23.90 | 23.90 | 23.90 |
| Steel, structural shapes, Los Angeles, cwt. | 23.90 | 23.90 | 23.90 |
| Steel, bars, dlvd. Phila., cwt., merchant quality | 16.50 | 16.50 | 15.70 |
| Steel, bars, Pitts., cwt. | 16.50 | 16.50 | 15.70 |
| Steel, bars, C.R., Pitts., cwt. | 19.45 | 19.45 | 19.45 |
| Steel, plates, Pitts., cwt. | 19.75 | 19.75 | 18.25 |
| Steel, plates, H.R., Pitts., cwt. | 19.75 | 19.75 | 18.25 |
| Steel, sheets, C.R., Detroit, cwt. | 28.15 | 28.15 | 26.90 |
| Steel, strip, C.R., Chi., cwt. | 36.18 | 36.18 | 36.18 |
| Steel, basic wire, Pitts., cwt. | 23.65 | 23.65 | 23.65 |
| **NONFERROUS METALS** | | | |
| Aluminum, ingot, lb. (market place) | 1.025 | .920 | .625 |
| Antimony, N.Y., dealer, lb. | 1.09 | 1.14 | 1.08 |
| Beryllium-copper, cost ingot, lb. | 5.90 | 5.90 | 5.65 |
| Brass, red, 85%, [sheet], lb. | 1.66 | 1.72 | 1.31 |
| Brass, yellow, [sheet], lb. | 1.61 | 1.67 | 1.26 |
| Cadmium, N.Y., dealer, lb. | 2.00 | 3.50 | 0.95 |
| Copper, electrolytic, wire bars, refd., lb. | 1.02 | 1.08 | .67 |
| Copper sheet, over 24 in., lb. | 1.74 | 1.81 | 1.40 |
| Lead, common, N.Y., lb. | .340 | .370 | .260 |
| Magnesium, pig ingot, [99.8%], lb. | 1.53 | 1.53 | 1.53 |
| Mercury, 20 fl. lots, N.Y., fl. | 350.00 | 360.00 | 235.00 |
| Molybdenum, oxide, dealer, lb. | 3.30 | 3.15 | 3.05 |
| Nickel, cathode, dealer, lb. | 4.65 | 3.80 | 1.75 |
| Platinum, dealer, oz. | 480.00 | 445.00 | 525.00 |
| Silver, N.Y., oz. | 6.29 | 6.43 | 5.51 |
| Tin, N.Y., dealer, lb. | 3.18 | 3.15 | 3.13 |
| Zinc, Prime West, East St. Louis, lb. | .47 | .46 | .38 |
| Zinc, die casting alloy, No. 3, lb. | .525 | .515 | .445 |
| **PAPER** | | | |
| Uncoated book #3 offset, ton | 890.00 | 890.00 | 860.00 |
| Watermarked bond, ton | 985.00 | 985.00 | 985.00 |
| Gummed sealing tape, carton | 17.09 | 17.07 | 16.29 |
| Grocery sacks, ton | 435.00 | 435.00 | 390.00 |
| Solid bleached paperboard, ton | 650.00 | 650.00 | 620.00 |
| Kraft linerboard, 42 lb., unbleached, ton | 410.00 | 380.00 | 350.00 |
| **TEXTILES** | | | |
| Burlap, 10 oz., 40", N.Y., yd. | .278 | .276 | .230 |
| Cotton drill, 1.85, 59", 68x49, N.Y., yd. | 1.22 | 1.24 | 1.08 |
| Cotton middling, 1", N.Y., lb. | .586 | .564 | .540 |
| Printcloth, 48", 80x80, N.Y., spot, yd. | .535 | .535 | N.A |
| Army duck, 37", 13 oz., yd. | 1.510 | 1.510 | 1.405 |
| Blended printcloth, 64", 78x54, yd. | .67 | .72 | .83 |
| 20s combed yarns | 2.04 | 2.00 | 1.77 |
| Wool 64s, Staple, lb. | 4.25 | 3.87 | 2.12 |
| **CHEMICALS** | | | |
| Acrylonitrile, tanks, lb. | .395 | .395 | .395 |
| Ammonia, anhydrous, tankcars, Gulf Coast, ton | 100.00 | 75.00 | 80.00 |
| Benzene, petroleum, tanks, Houston, gal. | 1.10 | 0.95 | 1.58 |
| Caustic soda, 76% solid, drums, carlots, cwt. | 26.00 | 26.00 | 26.00 |
| Cresylic acid [over 25%], tanks, lb. | .58 | .58 | .58 |
| Formaldehyde, USP, 37%, [12% to 15% meth.], tanks, lb. | .106 | .106 | .106 |
| Glycerine, synthetic, tanks, lb. | .685 | .685 | .910 |
| Methanol, syn., tanks, 4,000 gals., f.o.b. Gulf Coast plants | .53 | .49 | .28 |
| Naphthalene, crude, tanks, lb. | .22 | .22 | .22 |
| Phthalic anhydride, tanks, lb. | .32 | .32 | .27 |
| Polyethylene resin, low density liner film grade (market place), lb. | .445 | .425 | .285 |
| Polypropylene, homopolymer grade (market price), lb. | .530 | .495 | .350 |
| Polystyrene, general purpose grade (market price), lb. | .565 | .550 | .390 |
| Polyvinyl chloride, pipe grade (market price), lb. | .410 | .390 | .315 |
| Soda ash, 58%, light carlots, cwt. | 6.15 | 6.15 | 6.15 |
| Styrene monomer, 99.6%, tanks, lb. | .46 | .46 | .33 |
| Sulphur, crude, ex-terminal, Tampa, Fla., lt. | 127.50 | 127.50 | 152.50 |
| Sulphuric acid, 66%, commercial, tanks, ton | 66.86 | 66.86 | 66.86 |
| Titanium dioxide, anatase, reg., carlots lb. | .80 | .80 | .77 |
| Xylene tanks, gal. | .760 | .760 | .795 |
| **BUILDING MATERIALS** | | | |
| Lumber, 2x4 fir, mbf, cl | 323.80 | 320.05 | 327.30 |
| Lumber 2x2 pine, mbf, cl | 326.00 | 322.55 | 322.05 |
| Plywood, plyform, ¾", msf, cl | 568.05 | 568.90 | 566.45 |
| Plywood, ⅜", msf, cl | 400.25 | 397.85 | 381.90 |
| Cement, bulk, ton, tl | 64.07 | 64.07 | 63.25 |
| Sand, ton, cl | 7.32 | 7.31 | 6.82 |
| Ready-mix concrete, 3,000 psi/cu. yd., 15 cu. yd. | 48.94 | 48.84 | 48.15 |
| Crushed stone, 1½", ton, cl | 8.37 | 8.34 | 8.08 |
| Concrete blocks, sand/gravel, 8"x8"x16", ea., tl | 0.93 | 0.92 | 0.84 |
| Gypsum sheathing, ½"x1"x8", msf, tl | 231.21 | 225.54 | 207.84 |
| Brick, common, per thousand, tl | 204.62 | 201.12 | 188.10 |
| Asphalt paving, AC-20 | 137.93 | 139.05 | 124.66 |
| Concrete sewer pipe, 12", prem. joint, per foot, cl | 7.57 | 7.58 | 7.37 |
| **FUELS** | | | |
| Crude oil (W. Tex Int Cush), bbl. | 16.00 | 17.15 | 18.40 |
| Diesel (reseller rack, Chi), gal. | .4475 | .4660 | N.A. |
| Fuel oil No. 2 (N.Y.), gal. | .4600 | .4825 | .5035 |
| Fuel oil No. 2 (Gulf spot), gal. | .4225 | .4475 | N.A. |
| Fuel oil No. 6 (N.Y.) contract cargo, bbl. | 16.75 | 18.25 | N.A. |
| Gasoline (reg lded NY), gal. | .4525 | .4715 | .5300 |
| Gasoline (reg unlded NY), gal. | .4400 | .4575 | .5125 |
| Kerosene (reseller rack, Chi), gal. | .4930 | .5140 | N.A. |
| Propane (Mt. Belviu, Tex), gal. | .2400 | .2375 | .2325 |
| **SCRAP MATERIALS** | | | |
| Steel, No. 1, hvy., dlvd., Pitts., ton | 121.00 | 124.00 | 80.00 |
| Steel, No. 1 hvy., dlvd., Chi., ton | 117.00 | 117.00 | 73.00 |
| Copper, No. 1, East, wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .920 | .880 | .580 |
| Copper, No. 2, East, wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .810 | .785 | .500 |
| Brass, red, East, wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .880 | .840 | .540 |
| Brass, yellow, East, wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .415 | .415 | .330 |
| Alum., old sheet/cast, E., wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .625 | .575 | .385 |
| Alum., mixed clip., E., wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .710 | .660 | .420 |
| Zinc, old, East, wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .20 | .20 | .20 |
| Lead, clean solids, East, wholesale buy, dlvd., lb. | .210 | .240 | .155 |
| Paper, No. 1 mixed, dlr, N.Y., ton | Nom. | Nom. | Nom. |
| Paper, old corrug. box, dlr., Chi., ton | 25.00 | 25.00 | 25.00 |
| Paper, old corrug. box, dlr., N.Y., ton | 10.00 | 10.00 | 15.00 |
| Osnaburg cuttings, dlr., f.o.b. N.Y., lb. | .12 | .12 | .12 |
| White wipers, No. 1, dlr. buy, f.o.b. N.Y., lb. | .30 | .23 | .12 |

[Sources: Metals Week, American Metal Market, Engineering News-Record (20-city averages), Wall Street Journal, Journal of Commerce, Chemical Marketing Reporter.]